

Lily Culture

Plant your bulbs immediately in a well-drained site. If you cannot plant them immediately place them in the humid drawer of the refrigerator and plant as soon as possible. If drainage is poor and cannot be improved easily, plant in raised beds. Lilies prefer moist but not wet soil and they will rot if the ground is too wet. Lily bulbs, except for *L. candidum*, should be planted in a hole or trench whose depth is about three times the height of the bulb. *Candidum* lilies like shallow planting, and should never have over an inch of soil over the top of the bulb.



Nearly all lilies will thrive in full sun or partial shade. Full sun is appropriate for most Asiatic lilies and partial shade is better for most Orientals and some species lilies. Hot summer sun can bleach out some lily colors. Four to six hours of morning or early evening sun is often better than eight hours of sun in the middle of the day.

Protect the root area from high soil temperatures with light mulch or with low growing, shallow rooted companion plants. In nature many lilies are found growing in association with low shrubby bushes and perennials. They do, however, need to get their heads up into the sun.

Lilies are heavy feeders, so fertilize just as you would for vegetables. A complete balanced fertilizer (12-12-12 or 14-14-14) should be applied as soon as the plants emerge. Another application when the lilies are 4 to 8 inches high and one more application after the buds form will ensure healthy plants and beautiful flowers. Many successful lily growers use a complete balanced fertilizer that is time released such as "Osmocote", or a fertilizer that contains minor trace elements such as "Miracid" or "Miracle Grow".

In areas where heavy frost may be expected after the lilies have developed their foliage, planting near large trees or shrubs will give some frost protection. In extreme cases any sort of overhead cover is quite effective. A paper bag or cardboard box is good for reflecting the heat of the ground back on to the lilies and protecting them from frost.

Most modern hybrid lilies have been bred and selected for resistance to disease. It is rarely necessary to take any control measures other than ordinary sanitation. It is a good idea to remove all old stems and foliage in the Fall and destroy them. Lilies are almost insect proof, and only a few species of aphids will sometimes attack them. In this case a good insecticide is in order. A standard rose spray can sometimes be used for this purpose. Botrytis leaf spot is not likely to become a problem except in very humid areas. Spraying with fungicide should control it.

Remove old flowers as they become unattractive and do not allow seed pods to form. This will allow the plant to achieve the maximum bulb development and assure next year's flower crop. If it is desired to cut flowers and you wish the plants to retain their vigor, do not remove more than 1/3 of the foliage.

